

*Co-sponsors the Eunice Kennedy Shriver Act*

February 2, 2010

Washington, DC – As part of their annual Capitol Hill Day, representatives from the Pennsylvania chapter of the Special Olympics, joined this year by representatives of the Best Buddies organization, met with Congressman Sestak and his staff to discuss their respective programs and new legislation initiative.

“I respect the work and mission of both organizations,” said Congressman Sestak. “What they provide is priceless not only for the participants, but for the countless volunteers whose lives have been touched. I was particularly interested to hear about and share my support for their new joint legislative effort to update the Special Olympics Sport and Empowerment Act of 2004.”

Congressman Sestak has agreed to co-sponsor the soon to be introduced Eunice Kennedy Shriver Act, named after the late founder and long-time champion of the Special Olympics and Best Buddies. After Eunice Shriver passed away in August 2009, an effort was started to draft a bill, which would help carry on her legacy through the improvement of the lives of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The Eunice Kennedy Shriver Act provides support for global sports and related programming, social and recreational programs, and expanded research and training activities. More information about the bill is included below.

“Congressman Sestak’s sponsorship of the Eunice Kennedy Shriver Act truly honors Mrs. Shriver’s legacy of service to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities,” said Matt Stehl, Pennsylvania State Director, Best Buddies International. “The Congressman’s support of this important legislation sends a clear message of hope to all our Best Buddies.”

In addition to supporting the Eunice Kennedy Shriver Act, Congressman Sestak voted for the Serve America Act, which specifies that nonprofit organizations promoting competitive and noncompetitive sporting events for the disabled, such as the Special Olympics, are eligible for direct and indirect national service assistance. Additionally, in December, he voted for a consolidated appropriation bill, which provided an increase in funding for Special Olympics and other related programs.

### **Capitol Hill Day**

Eunice Kennedy Shriver dedicated her life to providing opportunities for children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDDs) to become fully integrated in society. Special Olympics first organized Capitol Hill Day for its constituents in 2005, and for the first time this year were joined by representatives from Best Buddies. Together, both Special Olympics and Best Buddies urged Members of Congress to authorize *The Eunice Kennedy Shriver Act*, which will continue a national commitment by the U.S. Congress made with passage of the *2004 Special Olympics Sport and Empowerment Act*.

This new legislation continues the legacy of Mrs. Shriver by authorizing funds for specific programs supporting persons with IDD in health, education and global program initiatives. Eunice Kennedy Shriver founded Special Olympics in 1968 and was a longtime supporter and board member of Best Buddies.

## **Special Olympics Pennsylvania**

Special Olympics Pennsylvania provides year-round athletic training and competition in 23 Olympic-type sports for individuals with intellectual disabilities and provides them with continuing opportunities to develop physical fitness skills, express courage, and participate in the sharing of gifts, skills and friendship with their families, other Special Olympics athletes and the community. More than 20,000 children and adults with intellectual disabilities or closely related developmental disabilities participate in over 260 local, sectional and state events. Athletes range in age from 8 to 80 and are of all ability levels. Nearly 40,000 volunteers provided the manpower for Special Olympics Pennsylvania last year. Volunteers of all ages serve as coaches, escorts, organizers, fund-raisers, entertainers, or sports officials. Special Olympics Pennsylvania competitions are offered year-round in 56 local programs across Pennsylvania, and it conducts four statewide competitions -- Fall Festival, Summer Games, Winter Games, and the State Floor Hockey Tournament.

Special Olympics Pennsylvania is a nonprofit, tax-exempt organization that raises the funds through the generosity of individuals, companies, and foundations. Visit [www.specialolympicspa.org](http://www.specialolympicspa.org) for more information.

## **Best Buddies**

Best Buddies is a nonprofit organization dedicated to establishing a global volunteer movement that creates opportunities for one-to-one friendships, integrated employment and leadership development for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Founded in 1989 by Anthony Kennedy Shriver, Best Buddies is a vibrant, international organization that has grown from one original chapter to more than 1,400 college, high school and middle school campuses across the country and internationally. Best Buddies programs engage participants in each of the 50 United States and programs on six continents.

Best Buddies Pennsylvania is a state affiliate of Best Buddies International, and was established in 1994. Today, Best Buddies Pennsylvania manages chapters at 1 middle school, 22 high schools and 28 colleges -- positively impacting nearly 18,000 people annually.

Within Congressman Sestak’s Congressional District, Best Buddies Pennsylvania manages chapters at:

High Schools:	Colleges:
Archbishop Carroll High School	Ursinus College
Haverford High School	Villanova University
West Chester East High School	

These 5 chapters positively impact the lives of nearly 2,400 people in the Pennsylvania 7th Congressional District.

Visit <http://www.bestbuddies.org/> for more information.

## The Eunice Kennedy Shriver Act

**TITLE I: Reauthorization of Special Olympics Act.** Directs the Secretary of State, acting through the Assistant Secretary for Education and Cultural Affairs, to make grants to Special Olympics; includes stronger inclusion language with respect to Department of Education activities; includes additional finding about health disparities among people with intellectual disabilities (ID)

- **\$9.5M** (such sums/5 years) **for Department of Education grants to Special Olympics** (up from \$6 million in FY04)
- **\$8.5M** (such sums/5 years) **for Healthy Athletes grants through HHS** (up from \$5.5 million in FY04)
- **\$4.5M** (such sums/5 years) **for Department of State grants for Special Olympics international programs** (up from \$3.5 million in FY04)

**TITLE II: HR 1824, the Best Buddies Act.** This legislation passed the House in April. The bill authorizes **\$10M** and such sums as necessary FY10-FY14 for the Department of Education to make grants to the Best Buddies organization to expand its programming.

### **TITLE III: Eunice Kennedy Shriver Institutes for Sport and Social Impact**

Purpose: To improve and advance opportunities for people with ID to fully participate and engage in inclusive sports and recreation, social activities, and other community opportunities through:

- (i) research, data collection, evaluation
- (ii) training, TA
- (iii) fostering interdisciplinary collaboration
- (iv) commemorating the work of EKS

#### Establishment of Institutes (Sec. 302)

- Secretary of Education will make competitive grants to one or more entities to establish Institutes
  - eligible entities will be a universities that specialize in disability research, in partnership with organizations that specialize in sport, recreation, and social activities for people with intellectual disabilities
  - grant period is 3 years, with option to renew contract an additional 2 years if grantee meets benchmarks outlined in the legislation
  - non-federal share is not less than 25 percent of the costs of the activities

- up to 10 percent set aside for national activities for coordination of network, technical assistance to grantees, reporting requirements, etc.
- application will include description of activities and benchmarks

#### Activities (Sec. 303)

- Establishing a research agenda with people with ID and other organizations conducting similar research
- Providing training and technical assistance to enhance education, recreation programs and social opportunities for people with ID and their families
- Collecting and analyzing data
- Reporting on findings and recommendations
- Authorization: (currently such sums as necessary, but still being negotiated)

*Born and raised in Delaware County, former 3-star Admiral Joe Sestak served in the Navy for 31 years and now serves as the Representative from the 7th District of Pennsylvania. He led a series of operational commands at sea, including Commander of an aircraft carrier battle group of 30 U.S. and allied ships with over 15,000 sailors and 100 aircraft that conducted operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. After 9/11, the Congressman was the first Director of Deep Blue, the Navy's anti-terrorism unit that established strategic and operations policies for the Global War on Terrorism. He served as President Clinton's Director for Defense Policy at the National Security Council in the White House, and holds a Ph.D. in Political Economy and Government from Harvard University. According to the office of the House Historian, Congressman Sestak is the highest-ranking former military officer ever elected to the U.S. Congress.*

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